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The work of the Sound Money League of Pa.

[Philadelphia]

[1896]

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The Work of the Sound Money League of Pennsylvania.

The Sound Money League of Pennsylvania is an organization about which little appears to be known here in its own home, which is its base of operations only, because its work is done quietly and unobtrusively; but out in the field, where the details of its work show, the name is as familiar or more so than that of any similar organization. This work, which is peculiar and which no other organization could do as well, has been effectively done, and it is done through the whole United States, more particularly in the politically doubtful States.

STRICTLY NON-PARTISAN IN CHARACTER.

The organization is strictly non-partisan, both as to its publications and meetings. Its representatives have never used its influence to further any one political party. No word has ever been said that both sound-money Democrats and Republicans alike could not approve. It has never raised

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the question of protection one way or the other. Its membership includes bimetallists, who favor bimetallism, though not by this country alone, and single gold-standard men. It has never had a previous record in favor of free trade as the New York Reform Club has had. It is not hampered by being only a trade organization as the New York Chamber of Commerce, which cannot as readily go outside of its peculiar province. The office of the League has become known as a general bureau of information on the money question. Inquiries come daily from the whole country, and the queries include standard ones like, "What does 16 to 1 mean?" for which printed replies are kept on hand, and also requests for information which would involve a week's work to properly answer.

A POPULAR NUMBER.

Publication No. 9 appears to have struck the popular fancy, whether because of its attractive form, convenient size, or brevity, cannot be said. A very large edition has already been published. If funds would permit the printing of as many copies of this one pamphlet as there are requests for, the edition would reach one million copies. A Western paper considered it of enough importance to translate it in full into German, and a socialistic

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publication considered that it required contradiction to the extent of four columns weekly for a month. Its author, for writing it, has had the honor to be called a fool on the floor of the State Populistic Convention in Pittsburg, by a man who always writes his name with the prefix "farmer," but who has spent his life "wild-catting" for oil, and has never lived long enough in one place to work a farm. In the illustrations of this pamphlet, published one year ago, was first used a long-bearded caricature of Senator Peffer as a type of Western free-silver advocates. A newspaper published in Salt Lake City soberly suggested that the book showed the dense ignorance of Eastern gold bugs in thus supposing that all the friends of free silver in the West had long beards.

THE DEMAND.

Not long ago a Chicago newspaper, in a list of similar organizations, made a single mention of the Pennsylvania League as a source from which literature could be procured. The result of that one notice was that within a few days special applications for different publications came from most of the Western and Southern States, including California, Idaho and Florida. That one demand aggregated 50,000 copies.

A prominent gentleman of this city, lately, was shown one day's mail of the Sound Money League as a sample of its business and requirements. In return he writes :—

"I am impressed more than ever with the opportunity for usefulness which the Sound Money League enjoys. The applications from distant States, such as Illinois and Iowa, show that the work of the League is understood and appreciated much more widely than I had supposed."

PREFERS PERSONAL TALKS.

A gentleman from one of the strong populistic counties of Northwestern Pennsylvania writes :—

"It seems to me great good could be accomplished by having competent speakers explain the money question at all the various villages and cross roads in the country—hold a school of instruction as it were. The difficulty is that the class that it is most desirable to reach are not readers, and they would comprehend a *fair, non-partisan* talk on the evils of free silver better than volumes on a subject that is almost as Greek to them. It would mean a good deal of work, but to my mind would reach a certain class that are hard to get at. One trouble with the Republican County Committees (and I am a Republican myself) is that the

party policy seems to be to denounce the Democratic party for its tariff policy. However correct this may be, I fear that it will only antagonize Democrats, and what we want now are votes irrespective of party. I make these suggestions from what I have observed personally in various parts of the State. I am not a practical politician, and the idea may not be according to usual rules, but I believe good might be accomplished nevertheless."

This is exactly the kind of work that this League has been doing in the past to the extent of its financial ability. Up to this time it is the only organization in the country that has done such work in favor of the maintenance of the present gold standard, though it has been done by the silver people and very thoroughly.

PREFERS LITERATURE.

Some correspondents favor speeches, some literature. The proper way to reach all classes is to use both methods. A resident of Mansfield, Ohio, speaking of one of the publications of the League, an address by Hon. Michael D. Harter, says :—

"This speech seems to have been published by you in pamphlet form. Have you any on hand, and if so could you supply me with some? I think it could be used effectually here where he was so

well known. It is apparent here more and more every day that a good deal of vigorous work has got to be done amongst a certain class of people to educate them. Stump speaking is not very effective in that direction in my opinion, but if you can get a man who is not posted on this subject to sit down by himself and carefully read over the speech of somebody he knows, or a plain statement of facts as shown by history, you can, nine times out of ten, convert that man, and not only do that but make the conversion lasting."

PROPRIETORS SHOULD BE MORE VIGILANT.

An employee of a large iron works in Western Pennsylvania, largely owned by a prominent supporter of the gold standard, writes :—

"I would be much obliged to you for some sound-money campaign literature. I am so situated that I could do some missionary work for the cause. The president and superintendent of the metallurgical establishment with which I am connected are both free-silver men. Outside of the workingmen who are largely affected, there are many others around here with leanings in that direction. Anything you can do for us will be highly appreciated."

The same kind of appeals come from organizations everywhere; from employers whose employees

have gone astray and appear to be unmanageable; from heads of political clubs who cannot get non-partisan literature to circulate to political opponents who might be persuaded to vote with them.

A COPPER MINER'S OPINION.

As a curiosity, we quote the following letter from the superintendent of the large stamp mills of two mines in the copper region of Lake Michigan :—

"I have been referred to you as furnishers of most useful reading matter on the money question. Kindly send me what you have in that line at once. If the silver miners are to be allowed to dump their product at the mint and take away two dollars for every dollar's worth of silver, the copper miners would like the same privilege of doubling the value of their product."

TO FIGHT BUTLER AND PEFFER.

A merchant in North Carolina writes :—

"We must have a great deal of help or populism is going to win here. Send us something."

A Republican of Kansas writes :—

"Send us all the help you can and send it quickly. We, as sound-money Republicans of Kansas, have the fight of our lives before us. We

expect to win if hard work and hard fighting can do it, but we must have help. Send us *non-partisan* literature.

The Secretary of an organization in another part of Kansas, to which the League sent considerable literature, writes :—

"The club is well pleased with your literature and sends hearty thanks, but we want more. We can use all we can get. We thank you for your promptness. Your matter is now going out rapidly. We wrote the New York Reform Club about the same time we first wrote you, but we have received no reply from them and no literature whatever."

METHODS.

One method of distribution of League matter has been to send samples to various sound-money men in this and other States, who responded in many cases with information where, from personal knowledge, such matter could be used advantageously. In many cases such people have taken charge of the distribution personally, which has thus been done very carefully. One of the most effective and economical ways of distribution has been at meetings held under the League's auspices, where, on application, the copies went directly into the hands of those who wanted to read them.

A MODEL ELSEWHERE.

The effective work of the Pennsylvania League has made this organization a model for other similar organizations elsewhere. A short time ago some prominent gentlemen in another city made inquiry as to the method of organization and style of work in the Pennsylvania League. The result of the information given has just been the formation of a non-partisan Honest Money League in Chicago.

The Chicago *Times-Herald*, of August 10th, says: "The Honest Money League of Chicago is the outgrowth of the success of a similar organization which has been started in Philadelphia, and which has grown to great and powerful proportions."

Similar non-partisan Leagues are projected in New York (which already has a Democratic Honest Money League), Boston, Pittsburg, Cleveland and other cities, which are intended to co-operate with each other.

LEADING, NOT FOLLOWING.

As proof that the League is leading, not following, this may be instanced :—

A few days ago Davis S. Cowles, of New York, announced that he had just had manufactured as an object lesson a disc of standard silver of the exact

thickness of a silver dollar, but containing just one dollar's worth of silver at the present market rates. A lecturer of the Pennsylvania League has been making use of such an object lesson for months, using an old Sicilian coin of 1713 for that purpose. Such bulky silver coins cannot be found in modern coinage. They do not belong to modern civilization, but to an era when there was little money and little business compared with the business of today. What coin there then was, was carried, not in modern pockets or pocket books, but in purses which were carried in the hand or at the girdle. Wealthy men and sovereigns had officers whose special duty it was to carry the weighty purse.

The representatives of the League have done hard and efficient service. One who has been much on the road since last November has made a mileage of over 30,000 miles.

These representatives, when the cry last winter was that the silver craze was over, were well aware of its extent among farmers and workingmen, and predicted the outbreak which took place at Chicago and which showed to all the full strength of the movement.

AN UNPLEASANT TASK.

Those who have thus presented the money question publicly under the auspices of the League

have had a most unpleasant task. In most political campaigns an orator speaks to his friends—Republicans to Republicans, Democrats to Democrats. He speaks to a friendly audience, which is a great assistance. One of the peculiarities of this campaign is that a League speaker usually speaks to his opponents. Not only has it been necessary to appeal to dissatisfied workingmen and farmers, but in all such meetings there have been present paid agents of the silver cause who were neither workingmen nor farmers, but were there solely to interrupt and annoy the speaker. In some localities it has required considerable nerve to speak in favor of a standard of money which is also the standard favored by Englishmen, Wall street magnates, trusts and monopolies. In the minds of some people not open to conviction, similar reasons would prejudice them against the use of pure air. In some localities also there has been only a hostile press. Certain meetings have been deliberately reported in detail by such newspapers without a single word of truth in the whole report.

SILVER STOCK AS BRIBES.

The League's representatives first discovered that stock in silver mines was being systematically used in this State as a bribe to speakers,

school-teachers and public men generally for their influence. The stock at present is worth nothing and is a cheap gift, as the mines are not working. But the recipients of the stock have been told that if through their efforts the silver cause triumphed the stock would be valuable. This explains the position of many a man in this and other States who would otherwise seem to have no reason for his course.

It was also discovered that the silver men had emissaries in this State, whose business it was not to make public speeches but to hunt up debtor farmers who were in distress from hard times, call upon them personally and convert them. The indications are that an immense amount of money has been spent in that way, even in Pennsylvania, which has come from interested parties, who are men of great wealth, but have no connection whatever with Wall street.

In literature the equipment of the silverites, in quality and amount, and the facilities for distribution, are far superior to those of the sound-money forces. They also first occupied the field and they have been working for years. The amount of such silver literature put out in this State has exceeded the sound-money literature by at least 50 to 1. Though the work of the League is most largely

outside of Pennsylvania it is not generally understood that work is needed here also—that a free-silver victory in Pennsylvania, with careful work on that side, might be possible. Pennsylvania *is* one of the battle-fields of the campaign, not only on account of the dissatisfied farmers in all but the extremely fertile parts of the State, but on account of the almost solid vote of the working classes who are leaning that way; not because they have anything against the gold standard, or in favor of silver, but because they have a grudge against their employers and are proposing to vote the silver ticket *en masse* only because their employers wish it otherwise.

THE NEEDS OF THE LEAGUE.

The League has a great work to do which should be done, but it has very little money to do it with. An appeal was lately made for funds, but the responses from this city and State in which only its funds have been drawn, were very few and of small amounts. This is accounted for by the fact that there are now so many other organizations in the field which have greater claims on certain classes, and which are now asking funds for similar objects. For instance, members of the Union League are expected to contribute to the campaign committee of that body. The members of the Manufacturers'

Club and business men generally have calls from the Business Men's Campaign Committee. The New York Bankers' Association are asking contributions from that class through the whole United States. The New York Reform Club and other New York organizations are now soliciting funds in Pennsylvania. The different ward, town, State and national Republican campaign committees reach all interested in politics. Now the sound-money Democrat committees will appeal to voters of that class. Those who wish to help this League should remit promptly to the Treasurer, Geo. C. Thomas, Esq., Chestnut and Fifth streets, Philadelphia.

PHILADELPHIA, September 1, 1896.

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